

NSC BRIEFING

9 September 1953

DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

(Burma)

The Burmese have all but given up hope that the four-power committee in Bangkok will be able to arrange the evacuation of Chinese Nationalist troops from Burma. Rangoon is planning to raise the issue again in the UN. It is also preparing to resume large-scale military operations against the Nationalists. Should these actions prove fruitless, there is evidence that the Burmese may feel compelled to seek Chinese Communist assistance in eliminating the Nationalists.

Four-power negotiations continue to be marked by the stalling tactics of the Nationalist representative, acting upon specific instructions from Taipei. Moreover, there are increasing indications that the Nationalist forces are still being supplied from Thailand by both land and air. These

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developments suggest that Taipei at best is contemplating only a token withdrawal, even if an evacuation agreement is reached at the Thai capital.

(Thailand)

Thailand police have arrested fourteen persons, including the air force chief of staff, on charges of plotting to overthrow the government in connivance with Vietnamese Communists.

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[REDACTED] the plotters were actually abetted by the Thai king. If this fact becomes widely known [REDACTED] Premier Phibun would 25X1C have to ask the king to abdicate. There has been no further evidence indicating that such a development is imminent. Should it occur, the prospects are that the ruling military clique would seek to dominate a regency that would rule for the king's infant son. These events are not expected to jeopardize Thailand's security.

(Philippines)

In the Philippines, the present campaign for the November presidential and senatorial elections is becoming increasingly heated. There are numerous indications that the Liberal Party is preparing to use fraud and force. Considerable evidence exists that Liberal leaders are seeking to obtain a Huk "surrender" by offering easy terms. The American embassy is deeply concerned that such a development would provide the Huks an opportunity to further their current infiltration tactics. This would be a serious threat to Philippine security.

President Quirino is [REDACTED] on the verge 25X1C of appointing a notoriously corrupt political general to the post of secretary of defense. This officer was Armed Forces chief of staff in 1949 and used the Army to support Quirino in the fraudulent elections that year. Finally, there is the possibility that Liberal leaders will resort to extreme measures to

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prevent Vice President Lopez, now running for the Senate on the anti-administration Magsaysay ticket, from succeeding to the presidency should the gravely-ill Quirino die before November. Should the November elections take place in an atmosphere of fraud and violence, the chances of Magsaysay's election are slim.